

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:)
)
Itsuko SAKAI et al.)
)
Serial No.: Not yet assigned) Group Art Unit:
)
Filed: June 11, 2001) Examiner:



For: PLASMA PROCESSING METHOD

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

Sir:

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.97(b)

Pursuant to 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.56 and 1.97(b), applicants bring to the Examiner's attention the documents listed on attached Form PTO-1449. Copies of the listed documents are attached. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner consider the documents listed on attached Form PTO-1449 and indicate that they were considered by making an appropriate notation on this form.

This Information Disclosure Statement is being filed with the above-referenced application.

The following are listed on the accompanying PTO-1449 and are in a non-English language

The following is a concise statement of relevance of the non-English language documents:

1. Japanese Patent Laid Open (Kokai) No. 9-251981 discloses a semiconductor device manufacturing apparatus with a gas circulation system.

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2. Japanese Patent Laid Open (Kokai) No 8-203868 discloses a plasma etching method and apparatus which returns at least a part of its exhaust gas to the gas introduction system.

3. Japanese Patent Application (Kokai) No. 6-327924 discloses a gas recovery apparatus with a gas circulation system.

4. Japanese Patent Application (Kokai) No. 7-299321 discloses a gas recovery apparatus with a gas circulation system.

Also in lieu of a statement of relevance or translation of the listed non-English language documents, an English-language abstract of the documents setting forth the relevance is enclosed.

This submission does not represent that a search has been made or that no better art exists and does not constitute an admission that each or all of the listed documents are material or constitute "prior art." If the Examiner applies any of the documents as prior art against any claim in the application and applicants determine that the cited documents do not constitute "prior art" under United States law, applicants reserve the right to present to the office the relevant facts and law regarding the appropriate status of such documents.

Applicants further reserve the right to take appropriate action to establish the patentability of the disclosed invention over the listed documents, should one or more of the documents be applied against the claims of the present application.

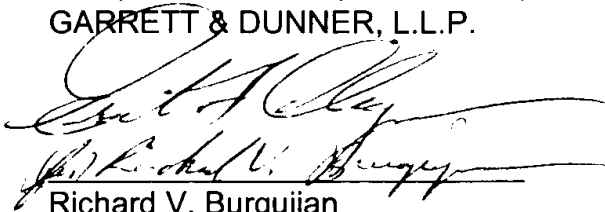
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If there is any fee due in connection with the filing of this Statement, please
charge the fee to our Deposit Account No. 06-0916.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: June 11, 2001

Enclosures
RVB/FPD/bl

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